

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing, re-examination and reconsideration of the subject matter identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.116, and in light of the remarks which follow, are respectfully requested.

By the present amendments, the feature of claim 1 has been added to claim 2 and claim 1 canceled. Claims 6 and 8 have been rewritten in independent form. By virtue of these changes, the dependencies of many claims have been corrected to eliminate reference to canceled claim 1. Since "Decalin" is a registered trademark of the DuPont Corporation, the word has been capitalized in every occurrence in the claims. Claim 26 was amended to eliminate dependency on multiply dependent claims 24 and 25. Claims 7, 68 and 73 were also amended to correct typographical errors. Claims 2-113 would be pending in this application upon entry of the present amendment with claims 21-60, 66-69, 73, 74, 76 and 78-113 being withdrawn from consideration.

Turning to the Office Action, claims 1-5, 10, 63-65, 72, 75 and 77 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by or, alternatively, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,013,729 to Tsujimoto et al. or JP 4154855 to Tsutomu for the reasons presented on pages 3-4 of the Office Action. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and for at least the reasons which follow.

Claim 2 has been amended to combine the features of claims 1 and 2. The cited prior art neither discloses nor suggests rubber compositions which are crosslinkable by hot

air, contain the components specified in claim 2, and wherein hot air-crosslinked rubber sheets obtained by molding the rubber compositions have the characteristics set forth in claim 2. As indicated on page 4 of the Office Action, combining the features of claims 1 and 2 would overcome any presumption of anticipation or obviousness.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the §102(b) and §103(a) rejections of claims 1-5, 10, 63-65, 72, 75 and 77 should be withdrawn. Such action is earnestly requested.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the election of species requirement. Claims 3-5 are dependent upon claim 1 and should be allowed. Allowed claims 6 and 8 have been rewritten in independent form. Claims 7, 9-87, 112 and 113 are all directly or indirectly dependent upon allowed claims and should also be allowed.

Applicants filed a second Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) on October 3, 2003. It is requested that an Examiner-initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form attached to the IDS be returned to Applicants. For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the date-stamped receipt card, IDS and 1449 form are attached.

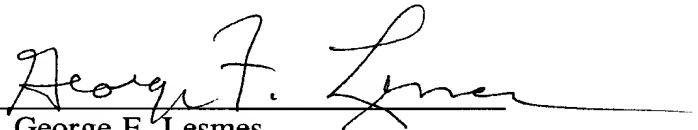
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order and such action is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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